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BELFAST MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

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COMMUNICATIONS, ORIGINAL AND SELECTED.

To the Proprietors of the Belfast Magazine.

ALTHOUGH party spirit is justly condemned by all men of moderation and sound judgment, yet it has existed in all ages, and will probably exist in society until the end of time. It is said, that truth is great, and will prevail; but if I may judge from experience of former ages, I would say, *error* is great, and will prevail. As I take it, *error* has had a predominant influence in every age. If I speak of religion, I presume this will be denied by none. The endless feuds and controversies, the *party spirit* which has prevailed, have always been unfavourable to truth: and while men have sought less to embrace her fair though unobtrusive charms, than to vanquish those who opposed their favourite dogmas, they have often maintained theses the most absurd and abominable, and have drawn down upon themselves the indignation and contempt of the discerning part of mankind.

In politics, party-spirit has had an equally powerful and extensive influence. And although this principle, when it merely expresses a temperate opposition to the violent, unjust, and arbitrary measures of those who govern, is a fair and worthy principle; yet, in its more usual sense, as applied to those who oppose others, whether right or wrong, it is a principle equally wicked, foolish, and detestable.

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The Grecian republics afford us many examples of this absurd and baneful spirit. What depositions, and changes in political measures, do we observe, where there existed no sufficient reason for such conduct: how many worthy men were subjected to the severest penalties, for no other reason, than because they had done eminent service to the state, and because it was apprehended they would possess, in course of time, too much influence with the people. Here faction truly did its proper work.

Look also at the multifarious revolutions which, at one particular time especially, took place in the government of Rome. Some of the Emperors did not rule longer than a few days. It was the demon of party that bore the sway; and that so frequently tore the crown from the brows of the newly invested monarchs, and trampled the imperial purple in the dust.

The intrigue which at one time produced so many changes at the Ottoman Porte, is also a striking proof of the absurd and criminal effects of party-rage.

In descending more immediately to our own time, we find numberless examples of the same odious and unreasonable spirit. The contests between the houses of York and Lancaster deluged England with blood. A party beheaded the unhappy Charles, and new-modelled the government. A party denationalized Ireland, and effected a legislative union between that and the

sister kingdom. "Let us strengthen our party," said the intriguing Pitt, "and let the energies of an Irish Parliament be swallowed up in the overwhelming abyss of a British court, and a British Parliament." And so it was.

Would I could say otherwise: but it is notorious, that party spirit rules even among those who undertake to manage the great concerns of the nation. The minister has his party; and against him is ranged a strong phalanx, headed by experienced combatants, who neglect no opportunity of distressing and mortifying the men in office. I grant a difference in opinion is unavoidable, but why should men who meet to deliberate on the great affairs of the nation, make it a main point to harass and undermine one another. Why do they make the affairs of the nation the platform on which to fight their battles?

But I come nearer home. I take Ireland, and say, when has she been free from the effects of the most virulent party spirit? I would gladly draw a veil over what is past. Let us see, if with regard to what is to come, we may hope for better things. No; not until Catholic emancipation be granted, and all equally good subjects shall be equally cherished by the state. Remove the ground of jealousy, and you strike at the root of the evil.

I am writing this on the 12th of July, and I have just seen various Orange lodges marching past my door, to the tune of the "Protestant Boys." Is this right, and as it ought to be? Are the Catholics to be for ever insulted by a petulant unfeeling party, who seem delighted to keep up the remembrance of former feuds and contentions? Or is it wise in our magistracy to tolerate those no popery processions, which, in my opinion, disgrace our society.

Certain it is, that these and similar parties always give rise to *opposition* parties, among those who are hurt, irritated, and disgusted, with the intemperate and foolish conduct of the adverse faction. If there are Thrashers and Carders in the country, I fancy the supporters of the Orange institution may thank themselves for much of the violence and crime with which these are chargeable. Let us cease to irritate our brethren, and they will cease to irritate us. Let party distinctions cease, and then we may hope, that peace, amity, and concord, will prevail.

PACIFICATOR.

To the Proprietors of the Belfast Magazine.

ANY person whose mind is possessed of the smallest spark of right feeling, cannot but be sensibly touched at viewing so widely spread in the world, that disposition which delights in annoying and irritating one another. Instead of endeavouring to find out measures that might be most likely to prove conciliatory, how frequently do we see new systems adopted, and fresh measures pursued, attended with circumstances the most aggravating.

Neither does it require any great share of discernment to discover the fatal effects that must result from this irritating disposition, too manifestly evident in many of our countrymen. This country has long been, as it were, the devoted victim to party feuds and intestine broils, arising from time to time from one cause or another; and I cannot help stating from repeated observation, that I believe no cause whatever of late years, has been more productive of ill consequences, or tended more to keep alive these party broils than that hateful system of Oran-